



**UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF**

2003 Earth Day Message

"Preserving the Environment While Protecting our Freedom"

For more than 227 years – through nine wars and the restless peace in between – Soldiers have been preserving our freedom. Today, The Army is as busy as it has ever been – strategically, operationally, and institutionally. Around the world, Soldiers are fulfilling their nonnegotiable contract with the American people – to fight and win our Nation's wars, decisively. To perpetuate that legacy, The Army does two things every day – train Soldiers and grow them into leaders. Quality facilities, realistic ranges, and challenging training contribute greatly to our ability to train and maintain our warfighting skills.

The Army dedicates substantial resources to environmental protection of our lands, and there are many examples of our success. By focusing on care and maintenance of off-limits areas, education, and outreach, Fort Irwin's programs make it a leader in important desert tortoise research. Environmental stewardship programs at installations such as Fort Bragg, Fort Polk and other posts are increasing the population of the endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker. The Army – from the youngest Soldier to the most senior officer, noncommissioned officer, and civilian leader – demonstrates every day that we will remain trained and ready while preserving and protecting the environment.

Environmental stewardship is everyone's responsibility. Earth Day is the 22nd of April, and the 2003 Army Earth Day theme is *Preserving the Environment While Protecting Our Freedom*. This twofold message is simple to remember; it recognizes the value of our training lands to our readiness; and it reminds us of our commitment to Americans everywhere. No matter what the endeavor – whether defending our freedom or protecting the environment – The Army will not fail.

Over the past months, I have visited many of you as you serve on point for the Nation in a hundred camps and stations. Your determination is as strong as I have seen in all my years of service – you accept any mission, no matter how difficult; you take any objective, no matter how tough the fight; and we are all immensely proud of you. Thank you. God bless all of you – Soldiers, civilians, retirees, veterans, and all of your families – and God bless this magnificent country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "E" and a cursive "Shinseki".

Eric K. Shinseki
General, United States Army